



STATE OF MARYLAND

## DHMH PRESS RELEASE

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### **Maryland Launches Broad Health Planning Effort Goal Is Progress in 39 Key Measures**

**Montgomery County, MD (September 8, 2011)** – Officials from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) today joined with local health officers, hospital executives, elected officials, and health advocates to announce the launch of the State Health Improvement Process, known as the SHIP.

The SHIP's goal is progress in health through accountability, local action, and public engagement. Unlike a static report, the SHIP exists on a continually updated website: <http://dhmh.maryland.gov/ship/>.

“While we have the world’s most advanced medical system in Maryland and we are a national leader in implementing health care reform, our health depends upon our environments, our behaviors, and our actions as a community,” said Lt. Governor Anthony Brown. “SHIP was built through public engagement and will continue to draw strength and ideas from across the state to improve the health of all Marylanders.”

**Accountability.** The SHIP includes 39 measures of health in six key areas, with data available by county across the state. The SHIP identifies 24 of these measures as reflecting critical health disparities. These measures were determined through a public comment period that included input from more than 250 individuals and organizations in Maryland.

**Local Action.** The SHIP will support local planning coalitions in counties and regions around the state to identify priorities, make plans, and take action. The Maryland Hospital Association and its members have committed to providing start-up funding for these coalitions across the state. SHIP offers local planners a model for population health planning, local data sets, and, through its interactive website, access to a series of specific tools such as materials promoting the Maryland Tobacco ‘Quitline’ 1-800-QUIT NOW and free legal consultations for localities through the Public Health Law Network.

**Public Engagement.** The SHIP, developed with comments from more than 250 professionals, organizations, and the public at large, will continue to draw on ideas from across Maryland. On-going public engagement will be sustained through the interactive website, with health suggestions and local coalition contact information for consumers as well as technical assistance for professionals and local planners.

“Maryland's hospitals do much more than take care of their patients; they also take care of their communities. And because taking care of communities requires not just commitment and collaboration, but also planning and resources, we are happy to partner with the state and provide important funding to make sure local planning efforts are not just happening in certain areas of the state, but all across the state. Our communities deserve no less,” said Carmela Coyle, President & CEO of the Maryland Hospital Association.

“I am pleased that the state has chosen Montgomery County to launch their health improvement process,” said County Executive Isiah Leggett. “Here in Montgomery County, we are committed to making informed decisions about health priority areas. The launch of our Healthy Montgomery website and community health improvement process earlier this year has helped us, especially in these lean financial times, to make budget decisions and develop strategies to target priority health issues.”

“This innovative effort launches at a critical moment for public health and health care,” said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, DHMH Secretary. “The SHIP will support community health efforts around the state to achieve health progress and health equity.”

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